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Remote Classes During the Pandemic: difficulties and strategies used by parents

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ABSTRACT – Remote Classes During the Pandemic: difficulties and strategies used by parents. The research's objective is to understand the social representations of parents about their difficulties and offered to their children. 147 parents/guardians of children in remote education participated. For data collection, a sociodemographic questionnaire and Free Word Evocation Test were used. The data were analyzed using prototypical analysis. The results showed difficulties with the internet, time management, concentration, and reconciliation of the study/work. The strategies adopted were: organization of the routine and the workplace and study, conversations, and monitoring of the children's activities. It was considered that these parents need more information and better school support.
Keywords: **Social withdrawal. Education. Remote Education. Family. Social Representations.**

RESUMO – Aulas Remotas Durante a Pandemia: dificuldades e estratégias utilizadas por pais. O objetivo da pesquisa é compreender as representações sociais de pais sobre suas dificuldades e estratégias utilizadas nas aulas remotas oferecidas aos seus filhos. Participaram 147 pais/responsáveis de filhos em situação de ensino remoto. Para coleta dos dados, utilizou-se questionário sociodemográfico e Teste de Evocação Livre de Palavras. Os dados foram analisados por meio da análise protótipica. Os resultados apontaram dificuldades com: internet, administração do tempo, concentração e conciliação do estudo/trabalho. As estratégias adotadas foram: organização da rotina e do local de trabalho e estudo, conversas e acompanhamento das atividades dos filhos. Considerou-se que estes pais precisam de mais informação e melhor suporte escolar.
Palavras-chave: **Afastamento Social. Educação. Ensino Remoto. Família. Representações sociais.**

Introduction

According to World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) data, in December 2019 the world was alerted about various pneumonia cases in Wuhan, China. At the beginning of January, Chinese authorities confirmed that the cause would be a new type of virus, from a family named *Coronavirus Disease* 2019 (COVID-19).

With the new global pandemic, quarantine was globally installed, and in Brazil, it wasn't different. In February, Brazil diagnosed the first case of COVID-19, and on March 17 the Educational Ministry approved the substitution of classroom lessons by emergency remote ones with the new digital apparel support due to social distancing measures declared in various States across the country (Brasil, 2020).

The government and population had to fit into a new life pace with the *Home Office* organization, with closed stores, schools, activities solely remote with the teacher's help. The getting around was only allowed in emergencies (Gandra, 2020; Queiroga 2020; Vercelli 2020). Through the pandemic crisis there was an installation of other crises, them being economic, psychological, educational and in all senses, because abrupt changes occurred (Alves, 2020).

According to Beto, Boff, and Cortella (2018) the moment in which individuals have to live inmate due to threatened health brings a new kind of coexistence that comes along with some changes and even in some cases, disturbances. The involvement and development of the family's roles in remote classes show transformations in what refers to the actions of said parents in an effective way to which their children will participate in class.

Ferreira (2020) shows that it should be positively considered the effective participation of parents in their children's lives and that aside from enable greater visibility to remote classes, it promotes something that until the moment was left unrealized. Due to day by day rush, most of these parents didn't have familiarity with this model of teaching, and in some cases with children's teach-learn process.

While following remote classes, there have been associated pedagogical responsibilities to these parents. This experience has given the opportunity to empathy in regard to a teacher's actions, that is, promoting a look of importance to the teacher's work, since these parents have been surprised and brought the following question: how is it possible to handle so many students at the same time? (Ferreira, 2020; Rocha, 2020).

Hodges *et al* (2020) explain that educational remote work is the kind of work that requires patience and creativity at the same time, because, aside from being applied by distance, it should preconize the real-time transmission of classes, promoting constant contact between teacher and student. Remote education refers to spatial distance, and what has been done year-round is an emergency remote teaching, that ought to be considered a temporary solution to an immediate issue.

According to Arruda and Lima (2013), the affectionate involvement of parents in children's monitoring makes their bond stronger and favors the child in their development, as well as benefits the parents in their child's construction of learning while a subject. In this context, parents had, while improvising, to learn how to teach and monitor their children, so much so that, aside from pedagogic and technology, aside from suiting recorded lessons, video conferences, anyways, to remote classes with both synchronous and asynchronous activities, in which the student receives the material and in a said moment of the day accesses said class in online mode.

However, to think about parents as moving agents, it's necessary to do reflections that, in a certain way, multiply not only the resulting motivations of this study, but also the motivation of knowing the unknown, and your own interest in these changes. In these parent's day by day routine, there have been great transformations, both in teaching and learning in a moment when life online breaks the distance barrier and communication will never be the same. Soon enough, there has been a qualitative jump and remote classes got stronger (Di Felic; Lemos, 2014; Calejon; Brito, 2020).

With all these recurring facts from the pandemic, there has been the caring of analyzing the context of parents and their difficulties and strategies to deal with educational subjects of their children in times of social distancing. In this context, you part from the hypothesis that social representations that parents have about the thematic show some situations in which affect their method of thinking and experiencing new technologies, that were unused until the moment in formal teaching.

The social representations are a method of knowledge and interpretation of the real, determined by the social structure in which it develops (Moscovici, 2012). Jodelet (1989, p. 04-05) defined the social representations as "[...] a form of knowledge, socially elaborated and shared, which has a practical objective and runs to the construction of reality common to a social setting".

According to Moscovici (2012), the individuals lead themselves to new information and represent them searching, at the same time, making and transforming their previous cognitive schemes, in what is possible and acceptable to their idiosyncrasies, like also adapting it to their old cognitive schemes, with objective for maintaining their world stable and safe. In this sense, social representations are related to the creation and transformation of values that, consequently, will influence the human relationship guidelines. In the formation of how an individual realizes themselves to the world and to the others, what was right to the former generation, to the new generation isn't and vice-versa.

The Social Representations Theory evolved in three search approaches over time, being sociogenic (Moscovici, 2012; Jodelet, 1989), the societal and the structural model that ascertains the representation's nucleus, considering the element tough as a part that resists

changes and gives coherence and meaning to a representation; investigate up also the peripheric elements that protect the nucleus. Both of these subsystems, central and peripheral, work exactly like an entity, in which each part has a role (Abric, 1998). In a way, this present search is based on this structural approach of social representations.

According to Abric (1998), a social representation constitutes itself like an organized group of information, beliefs, opinions, and attitudes. The social representations are structured in two aspects, that is, every representation has an image and an idea, that being, it has a figurative face and a symbolic face. With that in mind, social representations have functions and cognitive applicabilities, allowing understanding and reality explanation. They protect their identity meanings, situate the groups inside a specific culture, guide social practices, behaviors and conducts in a social group and allow social authors to explain and justify their postures and conducts in diverging social spaces.

In this moment of social distancing, families divide the house shores in between working hours and virtual meetings, for they are both in the *Home Office* and on duty to provide assistance to the children participating in remote activities and educational recorded lessons. Space and time are divided in everyday home life, school, and work, simultaneously. This shift towards a new way of teaching and learning, in turn, can influence the social representations of these parents and their way of dealing with a new reality.

This research's goal is to comprehend how the social representations of parents organize themselves, considering the difficulties and strategies used in the remote lessons offered to their children in times of social isolation. It is hoped that this research's results make it possible for parents, who now exercise the role of teachers, education professionals, society as a whole, and also government agencies, to reflect on the topic.

Method

The current research was developed based on a qualitative approach, in an exploratory and descriptive way, built on top of the structural point of view on the Social Representations Theory (Abric, 1998). The essay elaborates on the remote classes during the pandemic time period, family participation in the learning process, and the use of new technologies as an intermediate tool.

Participants

The sampling method includes population members that are available to researchers, conveniently named "Snowball". In this method, the participants themselves indicate future participants among their acquaintances. The sampling continues until data is saturated, that is, when the collected results begin to repeat and biome redundant (Naderifar; Goli Ghaljaie, 2017).

The inclusion criteria was to be parents of both sexes of children involved in the remote education situation. The study initially had 151 participating parents/guardians, but some were excluded from the sample as they only answered the sociodemographic questionnaire and not the Free Word Evocation Test, thus totaling the analysis of the responses of 147 participants. Their names were not mentioned in the study, therefore obeying the ethical procedures established for scientific research in Human Sciences.

Instruments

The instruments used were: a) Sociodemographic questionnaire that searched for come variables such as the city where you live, ease of access to the internet, education level, gender, current Home Office, age, marital status, ethnicity, family income, number of children, pedagogical support of the school in remote education, pedagogical means used in remote education; b) Free Word Evocation Test: it is a projective technique, in order to capture implicit aspects of the respondents' thoughts. It consists of demanding that the participant write 5 words or expressions that come to mind after hearing the term inducer (Vergès, 1992). In the case of the present research, two inducing terms were proposed: difficulties faced during remote classes and strategies used during remote classes.

Data collection procedures

The sociodemographic questionnaire and the Free Word Evocation Test were prepared using the Google Forms platform. The application of these instruments occurred through a link that was sent by email to parents/guardians of students in the schooling process in both public and private schools in the state and municipal networks of the western region of Grande São Paulo and Brasília, in the different levels (Elementary School, Middle School, and High School). The shared and answered link was available during the month of May of the year 2020, throughout a 20 day period, which was when in-person classroom teaching was suspended from Brazilian schools.

Data analysis procedure

For the analysis, the answered data were considered according to the following order:

1) Characterization of the parents/guardians group, occurred through simple descriptive analysis.

2) Semantic categorization: consists of grouping words or expressions with a similar semantic meaning to avoid further dispersion, such as patience, lack of patience, patience to explain activities that are not understood. According to Franco (2018, p. 63) "[...] the categorization

criterion can also be syntactic (verbs, adjectives) or lexicon (classification of words according to their meaning, with the matching of synonyms and similar definitions)".

3) After the semantic categorization treatment, a prototypical analysis was performed with the support of the *Interface R software for Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires* (IRAMUTEQ) (Camargo; Justo, 2018) of the words collected by the Free Word Evocation Test. The responses evoked from the inductive terms - difficulties faced during remote classes and strategies used during remote classes - constituted 2 initial corpora of the material to be analyzed, which were inserted separately in the IRAMUTEQ software. After processing the data, the prototypical analysis presents the construction of four quadrants, based on the calculation of frequencies and evocation orders of the words, in order to locate the degree of salience of the elements of the representation. These results present the possible words that occupy the centrality, the contrast zone, and the peripheries in the structure of social representations (Vergès, 1992).

Results

The survey included a convenience sample, in which 152 parents aged between 20 and 60 years participated, with 71.05% of them living in Grande São Paulo, the rest being distributed in the following: 9.21% in the Interior of São Paulo; 15.13% in Goiás; 0.66% in Bahia; 0.66% in Ceará; 1.32% in Paraná; 0.66% in Pernambuco; 0.66% in Rio de Janeiro and 0.66% in Rio Grande do Sul. Among them, only five participants do not have access to the internet at their residence. Regarding the level of education of participants, it was identified: 1,97% with a PhD; 8,55% with a Master's Degree; 40,13% with post-graduation; 22,37% with Complete Higher Education; 7,24% with incomplete Higher Education; 12,50% completed High School; 1,32% with unfinished High School; 3,29% with completed Middle School education; 2,63% with unfinished Middle School education. Among all, 87,5% were female and 12,5% male.

Due to the pandemic scenario experienced currently in Brazil, parents, as well as all Brazilians, had their lives affected by the protocols settled by WHO on January 30, 2020, such as the use of a mask in public places and means of transportation, use of hand sanitizer, social isolation, quarantine from work and school. Out of the interviewed parents, 68.42% work in *Home Office*, in contrast to the 31.58% who said they did not work at all. These situations imposed by the disease affect everyone without distinction of social class or ethnicity, however, those who are unfortunate visibly suffer a greater impact on their lives.

The following data should also be highlighted in this research: 3,29% are under 30 years of age; 55,26% are from 30 to 40 years old; 34,87% are from 41 to 50 years old; 5,26% are from 51 to 60 years old; 1,32% are above 60 years of age. The participants marital status is distributed as follows; 79,61% are married; 7,24% are divorced; 4,61% are separated; 6,58% are single and 1,97% did not declare a marital status.

Among them, 65,13% declared themselves white; 26,32% brown; 6,58% black; 1,32% yellow and 0.66% did not know what to define.

Regarding family income, 29.61% have salaries of 1 to 3 wages; 33.55% of 4 to 6 wages; 18.42% from 7 to 10 wages and 18.42% above 10 wages. Regarding the number of children, 46.05% reported having 1 child; 44.08% have 2 children; 7.24% have 3 children; 1.97% have 4 children and 0.66% have 5 children. In view of this scenario with their children at home, these parents indicated that 9.21% have no pedagogical support; 69.08% have pedagogical support and 21.71% have insufficient pedagogical support. As for the platform offered to carry out these studies at home by educational institutions, there are: 73.68% with digital resources; 17.76% only with printed material: workbooks; 0.66% have no digital resources offered and only 7.89% have digital resources and printed materials for their children to study at home.

Semantic categorization

In the first moment, there has been done an orthographic and grammatical revision of the participants' answers, as to adequate the text to analysis through the IRAMUTEQ software.

Sequel to that, as to facilitate and uniformly analyze the data obtained through the research, considering the participants' answer intention, with no change to the semantic meaning of the words, there have been some reviewing to the text.

The word *patience* was mentioned up to 57 times, in some cases, it was linked to question 1, related to the difficulties faced referring to distant teaching of their children in function to social distancing because of Covid-19: *patience, missing patience, patience to explain activities that aren't comprehended.* In question 2, about strategies used to deal with the problem, the word *patience* surged in the following phrases and expressions: *patience, try to have patience, train patience, be patient, exercise patience, breath deep* (in this case it was opted to change the word *patience* to uniform the expressions, without modifying its meaning), *exercise patience, have patience.*

In addition, the word *impatience* was mentioned 7 times, all answers to question 1 (related to problems faced), having one of them relating to children

(*children's impatience*).

In turn, the word *dedication* was mentioned 4 times, 3 of which relate to strategies used (question 2), and only one of them related to question 1, about problems faced. In one of the cases, the expression came linked to activities: *dedication to activities.* In this case, the expression was resumed to *dedication*, as in uniforming the words.

The term *schedule* showed up 12 times, as follows: *schedule, combined schedule, discipline in schedules, a shock of schedules.* Except for the last expression, all have been mentioned as strategies used (question 2), and all were summarized to *schedule*, as in to uniform.

In some situations, the term *schedule* might mean and relate to the word *routine*. For that reason, it has been opted to change it to *routine: have a study schedule,) regular sleep hours, wake up and go to sleep schedule, determine a schedule, schedule planning, and a study routine, organization of schedule, school schedule, have a schedule to meet, being able to maintain a fixed schedule, try to do activities at the study hours, keep the school schedule, study schedule, school schedule, establish a study schedule.*

In other situations, the term *schedule* showed up linked to expressions that brought a meaning closer to other word or expressions: *discipline in the schedule* (was reduced to *discipline), living with frequent changes in school planning (schedule, days of the week), time with synchronous activities* (was reduced to *changes in planning), working in a schedule that may assist you in watching lessons* (was reduced to *assist),* and *demanding schedules due to lessons* ((was reduced to *demand).*

With effect, the word *routine* was the one that showed up the most in answers (80 times), however, in many answers, like in the examples above, the participant didn't write *routine*, but another expression with the same meaning, that being, in these cases, it was opted to reduce the word *routine* to simplify and uniform the answers, making it easier to analyze the *corpus.* This change was made in the following hypothesis: *family routine, the right time for activities, maintain a routine, it's difficult to keep the work routine, make breakfast and leave it on the table while waiting for lessons, lack of routine, to have a study schedule, study planning, follow the week-agenda and activities, regular sleep schedule, waking up and going to sleep schedule, defined routine, try to teach the child a routine, homework must be done in sequence, we made a daily routine, try to maintain routine, activities routine, verify homework platform, a study routine, we created a routine,* in which were made adaptations to this new teaching reality. *So far, but so close!* (in this hypothesis, the word *routine* is as relevant as *adaptations*, because of that, it has been chosen to use both words: *adaptations* and *routine), every day a time for study, messing up the routine, we made a routine and were trying to follow, do a study routine, do activities and then watch TV, messing up the routine, keep the study routine, from time to time, and divide the schoolwork in the most hours possible, homework as soon as class finishes, do a subject a day, adjust, have a routine, faithful routine on both ends, try to do the activities on school time, create a routine, do a subject a day* and *try to give the child some routine.*

Following, another word that appeared a lot was *time*. In the same way as the words that came before, it was necessary to change it, as in to uniform, without losing the expression's meaning or the participant's will. Of the 57 times the word appeared, in 26 it was isolated. In some cases in question 1, signaling the time as a problem faced and, in some cases in question 2, as a strategy to deal with the problem. In the rest of the cases, the word *time* was mentioned associating itself with other words. The main association was *lack of time*, which appeared 10 times. In these cases, it was opted to reduce it to *time*, as in to uniform and

simplify to the *corpus* analysis. In the rest of the cases, the word *time* was utilized in the following ways: *available time, answer time, time management, lack of time to me, I have no time to keep up with the activities, study time, I waste all my time at home trying to teach them, time to minister my daughter's classes, time managing, even if everybody is home, we have no time to help him…, unavailable time, organizing time, time managing, all the time, time spent harms a mother's job:* in all of these cases, the participant showed *time-related* problems. For this reason, all expressions were reduced to *time*.

Difficulty in reconciling activities was mentioned 17 times, in most of them related to getting used to their children's study routine at home with parents work. Yet, each participant answered with different phrases or expressions, all of them were standardized to reconcile work and child's study, the answers with that meaning were: *I work in a company where I have meetings all day and I can't keep up with my daughter's study, work and also coordinate distant teaching, difficulty in reconciling Home Office, time spent harms mother's work, fitting working time into school activities, I can't help and concentrate in my work* (in this case, the reconciliation is also related to concentration, however, it has been chosen to classify this answer as reconciliation because it is a more relevant expression because reconciliation appeared more than concentration). *Keeping up with school and working at the same time, I wasn't discharged from work so they only had the evening to study or only the weekends, work x study routine* (even though the difficulty with routine was mentioned in this answer, it is clear that the biggest difficulty is in reconciling and not in establishing a routine), *school is sending many lessons and the parents at home are working,* (this answer is also associated with the excess of homework, however, in the previous answer this participant had already mentioned the excess of schoolwork, so it was chosen to classify this answer as problems to reconcile work and child's study), *I can't help and concentrate in my work.* In the rest of the cases, the word *reconcile* showed up linked to other expressions: *reconcile various tasks, reconcile the house routine with work* and *reconcile many home and work tasks.*

Internet problems appeared in answers 17 times. The answers were uniformed to *rough internet* and were brought up in the following way: *internet crash, poor connection, the internet sometimes crash, difficulty accessing, because access to the internet sometimes fails, the internet is slow, internet crashing, the internet sometimes doesn't sustain, verify always, slow internet, when the system fails because of oscillation on the internet,*

Aside from internet problems, participants also showed, to a smaller degree, computer problems, in some answers, the problem was the lack of a computer, while in others, the problem was related to the child's training or the nanny using the computer: *A single computer to work and the child to study, I had to get five other computers, what isn't easy to any family, computer, because access to activities through cellphone, technology: computer tool.*

Another difficulty faced by participants was the material sent by the school. The answers about this theme were uniformed to *bad material*: *horrible to see the lessons, incomplete material.*

The word *knowledge*, mainly related to lack of knowledge (unfamiliarity), was mentioned eight times in different manners, in some cases the word or expression used wasn't *knowledge*, but it was chosen to change the word as a way to uniform it, without modifying its semantic meaning: *knowledge. children's pedagogic knowledge, I don't know many things, not knowing how to make the activity, the difference between my age and now's teaching, lack of knowledge, search for knowledge.*

The *insecurity* was a feeling mentioned also in many ways, having appeared up to seven of them, in only one case was it used in a not isolated way: *insecurity in not knowing the limit of how much a mother can interfere in the lessons' process*, in the rest of the cases participants answered solely *insecurity* or *insecurities.*

The word *demanding* was brought up in answers also seven times, the answers that had the word *demanding* (or *demands)* didn't come in an isolated way were uniformed to *demand*, in the following cases: *lesson demand, no explanation to demand in subjects, remembering what to do then demanding activities,* etc… and *demand schedules regarding classes.*

The word *autonomy* is also mentioned in problems and strategies adopted by participants, it showed up in the following manner: *stimulus to autonomy, make them be responsible of homework, children's autonomy, kid's autonomy, he's doing it by himself, only sometimes do we have time to help him.* In the rest of the cases, the word appeared isolated.

The *reading* also takes part in the participants' activities, having appeared eight times, most of them isolated, however, in some cases, the word came associated with *reading material, books, stories, calculus, day by day reading,* and *basic books reading slowly.*

The *help to children* was evidenced in various ways, all the answers that, somehow, brought this meaning, were uniformed to *help.* In total, the *help* appeared in 16 situations, like in the following cases: *I help, help, helping, I help my 2nd-grade son when everything is quiet, not always do I manage, help in the possible manners, we have been able to develop together, some teacher proposed activities, we are trying to help, but it's hard, being available to doubts, help in activities, be together* and *problematize so that children can answer.*

Problems related to *school content*, like a critic to the schools, were highlighted by participants in the following expressions: *interactive content, too much content, the school content sometimes is superficial, lack of deepening the content, the school is too contentious, out of content theme, more advanced content than the school's day by day, discipline content, superficial content, inappropriate content to the grade of my children.* In total, the problems with school content were mentioned 15 times. All were uniformed to *content.*

The word *attention* was mentioned by participants 15 times, in their majority in an isolated form, however, in some cases, the word *attention* came accompanied by a phrase or expression, in these cases, the answer was uniformed to *attention: make the kid pay attention to the class, my 8 and 10-year-olds never stay the 5 hours of lesson paying attention, lack of attention from the kid, attention to all, pay attention.*

Yet, the word *concentration*, which appeared 22 times, in their majority related to a *lack of attention*, because of that, in some cases, it has been opted to centralize the expression or phrase in *concentration* and not in *attention*, because in these cases the bigger weight of the answer is related to *concentration*. The term *concentration* emerged or was chosen by its meaning in the following cases: *lack of concentration, the little one's concentration, they can't concentrate, the concentration of their part, lack of attention to watch the lesson, maintain attention, grab their attention in online classes, the kids got kind of distracted in this way, the difficulty of concentrating in classes, they can't concentrate, concentration in classes, lack of attention of the kid.*

The *games* also were strategies adopted by parents in the pandemic, the word emerged 11 times and was uniformed to *games* in the following phrases or expressions: *playful games, more games, backyard games, kids in school learn playing* (in this case, it emerged as a problem related to lack of games), *search for diverse activities with games* and *interact with games and plays.*

As a way to help their children, parents used the re*search*. There were 10 appearances of the word. The word, aside from having been used in an isolated form, emerged associated with: *research of extra pedagogical activities, research of determining subjects to elucidation, internet research about subjects matter, search for research sources, research the internet to help, research before helping.*

The word *participate* appeared many times. Sometimes bearing the meaning close to *following*. In the following expressions, the word *participate* was more relevant, so they were uniformed to *participate*: *participate along with classes, participate in classes clearing doubts, I try to participate in some classes with my daughter, participate in classes clearing your doubts.*

On the other hand, the word *monitoring* was brought up 19 times and was more relevant in: *I can monitor her, monitor the tasks, try to monitor online classes, monitor classes, monitoring, monitoring activities, monitoring them in all activities, distant monitoring, literally monitor classes, I try to monitor in the best way, but as far as possible im monitoring, monitor the kid's study.*

The word *tiredness* was mentioned by participants 9 times: *tiredness by the accumulation of assignments (paternity, work, study, house), tired parents, paternal tiredness*, in these cases the expression or word was reduced to tiredness. In the rest of the mentions, the word was mentioned in isolated form.

The *school support* was also mentioned in answers (9 times). In some answers, it came linked to lack of support, as a problem faced: *lack of school support, too little information on the teacher's part, communication with the school, lack of school support, lack of support from the educational institution, lack of appropriate support, lack of pedagogical orientation or parents training.* In other answers, the *school support* was brought up as a strategy used to deal with problems: *keep contact with teachers, contact with teachers, send difficulties to teachers, partnership with teachers.*

Prioritize also was a form of uniforming expressions or phrases (8 times): *prioritized satisfaction of primary necessities, do what you can, the most important thing to do first, is trying to do at least the most relevant activities, an activity a time, let my work aside, keep calm and know that it's impossible to do everything* (in this case, *keep calm* has the same relevance, because of that, both answers were considered), *try to do at least the most relevant activities when you can't don't.*

Problems related to *focus* were brought up 10 times in the answers, in the times where the word wasn't isolated, it showed up in the following answers: *do as he focuses on class, dosage playing and tass being in the same ambiance, focus on tasks, they wouldn't focus, they wanted to play.* In all of these cases, the phrases were substituted by *focus.*

Prototypical analysis

From the inductive term *difficulties during remote classes*, 314 different words were identified and evoked by the participants. It was considered the average frequency of 11.14% and the average order of evocations (AOE) was considered to be 2.6 with a minimum frequency of 5. Therefore, words with a minimum frequency of evocation below 5 were classified as having a low evocation order and were not included in the quadrants. Table 1 presents the results of the prototype analysis:

Table 1 – Prototypical analysis referring to the inductive term
***difficulties faced during remote classes* (N=147)**

Average frequency	AOE≤ 2.6			AOE> 2.6		
	NORMAL SITUATION					
	Central Elements	*f*	**AOE**	**Elements of the 1st periphery**	*f*	**AOE**
	Time	39	2.00	Patience	23	2.70
	Concentration	16	1.90	Routine	15	3.10
	Bad Internet	15	1.90	Sociability	13	3.20
	Balance of work and child's study	13	1.90			
NORMAL	**Elements of Contrast**	f	**AOE**	**Elements of the 2nd Periphery**	f	**AOE**
	Doubts	7	2.40	Fear	10	3.60
≥ 11.14	Insecurity	6	2.00	Tiredness	10	3.30
	Monitoring	6	1.70	Anxiety	9	2.80
	Discipline	6	2.00	Attention	8	3.00
				Impatience	7	3.10
				Focus	7	3.10
				Organization	7	3.00
				Lack of material	6	4.30
				Learning	6	3.30
				Interest	5	3.20

Caption: f = frequency; AOE- average order of evocations. Source: Elaborated from the results organized by the *software* Iramuteq.

From the results of the free evocations of words presented in Table 1, it is possible to understand how the social representations of the participants of the research on remote classes are organized. According to Abric (1998), the understanding of social representations refers to the interpretation of social behaviors and practices that can be organized in the structure around a central nucleus and a peripheral system.

In the first upper left quadrant, it is possible to observe the elements that had a greater predominance in the evocation of the participants and are presumably a part of the central nucleus of the social representations of the inductive term. The element *time* presented a higher frequency and higher order of importance in the first upper left quadrant.

The central elements of a social representation generate meaning, establish an organization, and can also provide stability and continuity to the representation (Abric, 1998). Therefore, the participants bring negative representational elements about remote classes that point out the need to concentrate, but the bad internet and the difficulties of balancing work and child's study time can disturb this process.

Abric (1998) points out that such representations present the social-cognitive dimension experienced by these participants in the conditions of social withdrawal due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19. These social representations explain that the time factor was a challenge faced by these parents in monitoring their children's remote classes.

The occurrence of school closures and the practice of remote education presented a struggle to balance competing responsibilities with the limitation of resources such as time and energy. The organization of daily family time has become a difficult task to be done since all family members have started to carry out their work and study demands in a single environment, which at times can conflict with individual interests and obligations. With regard to the time period for remote classes, Barbosa, Viegas, and Batista (2020) point out that, in the teachers' perspective, there was no reduction in time compared to face-to-face classes, but less participation by students.

The peripheral system that is organized around the central nucleus responsible for updating and contextualizing the representation must be highlighted. In the upper right quadrant, they are shown the elements the periphery close to social representations and refer to the assimilation of new concepts, not yet fully incorporated into the central nucleus, but indicating a possibility of innovating opinions and beliefs. It should be noted that changes may occur due to this periphery's stability which brings influences to the central nucleus (Abric, 1998).

The most frequent element of the first periphery is *patience* and the element *sociability* presented the highest order of importance. Participants evoke that in order to influence changes in social practices, that is, for sociability to occur, patience is needed with the new routine of remote classes. Based on Social Pedagogy, Berg, Vestena, and Costa-Lobo (2020) recommend, in this case, patience, cooperation, and cognitive flexibility for the development of autonomy and creativity, in order to be able to promote networks of support for students, parents, and teachers, in the face of weaknesses arising from the emergency remote education in times of pandemic.

The lower left quadrant, also called the contrast zone, is composed of elements that had low evocation frequency, but that was considered important, as they were promptly evoked. In this quadrant, the most frequent and most important element was *doubt*. Soon, clashing with the central nucleus, a smaller group of participants highlight that their doubts about remote classes are based on their insecurities in following their children's disciplines.

The responsibility for the education of the children starts with the family and, in this context, the school predisposes to a teaching-learning environment. Several parents do not have pedagogical training to mediate content from specific subjects. In addition to their work demands, this group of parents finds themselves overwhelmed when monitoring their children's school activities (Marques; Fraguas, 2020). In such a way, the struggle to balance the parent's job demands with the need to help their children at home with school learning has clashed with oppressed parents and with a lack of personal balance, due to the pandemic scenario.

In the lower right quadrant, called the second periphery, elements more distant from the likely central axis of social representations can be identified. In this quadrant, there were higher frequencies in sev-

eral elements, but the least mentioned element was *interest* and the one with the lowest order of importance was *anxiety*. The elements evoked by the participants in this last quadrant point out that fear, tiredness, anxiety, impatience, and lack of material were elements present during the period when parents tried an organization to promote the attention, focus, and interest of their children for learning.

Borloti *et al* (2020) warn about the urgency of considering the impact of the social withdrawal scenario due to the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of the population. In this sense, post-traumatic stress and emotional instability, related to anxiety, anger, and depression, are common symptoms in this scenario. According to Abric (1998), what interests us to perceive in this last quadrant (second periphery) are the elements less mentioned and more distant from being part of the central nucleus. Those would be the elements that would need to be better researched and deepened to understand the reason why they are barely mentioned by the participants. In this sense, the elements of *interest* and *anxiety* are presented as candidates for future investigations.

From the inductive term *strategies used during remote classes,* there have been 333 different identified words that were evoked by the participants. It was considered the average frequency of 11.95% and the average order of evocations (AOE) was considered to be 2.45 with a minimum frequency of 5. Therefore, words with a minimum frequency of evocation below 5 were classified as having a low order of evocation and were not included in the following quadrants. Table 2 presents the results of the prototypical analysis:

Table 2 – Prototypical analysis referring to the inductive term *strategies used during remote classes* (N = 147)

Average frequency	AOE≤ 2.45			AOE> 2.45		
	NORMAL CONDITIONS					
	Central Elements	*f*	**AOE**	**Elements of the 1st Periphery**	*f*	**AOE**
NORMAL **≥ 11.95**	Routine	59	1.80	Patience	28	2.60
	Organization	14	2.10	Time	13	3.40
	Environment	13	2.20			
	Monitoring	12	1.80			
	Conversation	12	2.20			
	Contrast Elements	f	**OME**	**Elements of the 2nd Periphery**	f	**OME**
	Discipline	10	2.40	Games	9	2.60
	Online lessons	7	2.30	Prioritize	8	3.10
	Timetable	5	1.40	Help	6	3.00
				Attention	6	3.80
				Sociability	5	4.00
				School support	5	4.20
				Reading	5	2.80
				Responsibility	5	3.00
				Reward	5	3.80

Caption: f = frequency; AOE- average order of evocations. Source: Elaborated from the results organized by the *software* Iramuteq.

From the results of the free evocations of words presented in Table 2, it is possible to understand how the social representations of the research's participants are organized on the strategies adopted to face the difficulties related to the remote classes.

In the first upper left quadrant are the elements that had a greater predominance in evoking the participants on this issue and are presumably a part of a central core of the social representations of the inductive term. The element of *routine* was more frequent in the first upper left quadrant.

There is no doubt that the impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on society generates changes in the routine of individuals involved. However, the word *routine* appeared in both moments of the research, both as a difficulty faced (Table 1, upper right quadrant) and as a strategy adopted to face the difficulties. The routine has a strong impact on people's lives due to the aspect linked to the change in behavior caused by the new routine and also as a way of organizing themselves to enable the activities proposed in social isolation to be carried out.

Lifestyle changes are recommended in coping with the pandemic. Small changes in routine can help, such as giving children autonomy and teaching them to have responsibilities for domestic tasks (Queiroga, 2020). The *organization* has been associated with *routine* as a second strategy most adopted by the participants, appearing as a central element of a second frequency, its relevance is highlighted by having presented a higher order of importance than the word *routine*. The *environment* and the *conversation* are elements of the central nucleus that, although less frequent, bring a greater order of importance than the elements of *routine* and *organization*.

Children and teenagers have been resisting the routine, as they believe that they are on vacation since they are at home, this situation has generated stress for them and their parents; parents feel powerless in the face of this situation, especially with regard to the absence, often, of a specific space for students to perform tasks and participate in virtual interactions privately, since the family is at home all the time (Alves, 2020).

In this way, it is possible to highlight that organizing in relation to the routine and the environment, as well as the conversation, are main representational elements that help parents to deal with their child's distance education, due to the social physical distance for Covid -19.

In relation to the conversation, this is of critical importance, since understanding and keeping information about the pandemic are factors that help families to organize and reduce daily stress. However, parents are not always prepared to guide their children, as they also need to be guided (Fegert *et al*, 2020), being able to exercise this parenting role at the school itself, the hospital (if there is hospitalization), and, also, responsible public agencies.

The evocation of *school support*, as one of the strategies adopted to face the difficulties related to distance learning by parents, appeared in the lower right quadrant, which is the one with the biggest distance from the central nucleus. However, *school support* was the evocation with the highest order of importance in terms of evocation order. Thus, seeking school support is an important strategy.

The school can provide information to assist parents in the task of managing their children's distance learning. This information can include tips for parents on how to talk to children and teenagers about COVID-19, the associated risks, and changes in everyday life. In addition, information on how to manage everyday life at home during quarantine and social detachment, as well as on distance learning, can be useful (Fegert *et al*, 2020).

These representations are supported by practical low evocation strategies, that is, responses highlighted by a smaller group of participants, such as *discipline*, *online lessons,* and a *timetable*, with *discipline* being the most frequent and most important element. Thus, the lower left quadrant, also called the contrast zone, is composed of elements that had a low frequency of evocation, but which were considered important, as they were promptly evoked.

In this quadrant, the second most frequent element was *online lessons*. It is worth mentioning that the *internet* represents an instrument of great importance to the evocations because, regarding the question about difficulties faced, the expression *bad internet* appeared as a central element, and in the strategies adopted (question 2), the use of *online lessons* emerged with a great order of importance. Although it is framed in the quadrant of the contrast elements with a low frequency of evocations.

The use of the internet for distance learning was characterized as a very pertinent strategy for the continuity of the studies of teenagers and adults, despite incurring serious limitations in its application to children due to the difficulties of applying online curricula (Senhoras, 2020), especially in the context of public schools or even private schools that reach the low-income population. In this sense, it is understood that there are barriers that prevent students from being fully involved with remote learning opportunities, such as special educational needs of the student, lack of parent's knowledge of pedagogical content, need for better communication with the teacher, lack of access to digital technologies and internet quality.

However, in informal education, online educational platforms have become, in a COVID-19 pandemic context, an opportunity to update the knowledge of teachers, students, and parents or to continue studies in the absence of face-to-face classes (Senhoras, 2020).

As explained in the first question result's analysis about the difficulties faced, the peripheral system is responsible for updating and contextualizing the representation. In the upper right quadrant, they constitute the periphery close to social representations and refer to the

assimilation of new concepts, not yet fully incorporated into the central nucleus, but indicating a possibility of innovating opinions and beliefs. It should be noted that changes occur because this periphery is stable and brings influences to the central nucleus (Abric, 1998).

From this perspective, the most frequent element of the first periphery is *patience* and the element of *time* presented the highest order of importance. The participants evoke that to organize the *routine*, the *environment*, with monitoring and conversation, it is necessary to have patience and time.

In the lower right quadrant, called the second periphery, the elements identified are more distant from the likely central axis of social representations. In this quadrant, there were higher frequencies in several elements, but the least cited elements were *sociability, school support, reading, responsibility,* and *reward*, and the one with the lowest order of importance was *games*, which, in turn, was the most frequent. The elements evoked by the participants in this last quadrant point out that proposing games to the children, helping and giving attention, in addition to prioritizing the activities were what helped the parents to adapt to the routine and organize themselves better, facilitating the coping with the pandemic.

The pandemic and social withdrawal brought new dynamics to families that have children and teenagers studying remotely, which allows reflecting on the changing representations of childhood in Education, in the light of this new reality (Custódio, 2017). However, it is possible to identify, through the social representations of the participants that, despite difficulties mainly related to the lack of structure linked to the environment and the internet, parents have used strategies such as organizing the routine, the time, the conversation, and monitoring of the children, facilitating rapid adaptation to new times.

Considerations

This article aims to understand how the social representations of parents are organized regarding their difficulties and strategies used in remote classes offered to their children during the social distancing period. It is known that, in mid-2020, a movement of social withdrawal started in Brazil as a strategy to combat or at least reduce the spread of COVID-19. At the time this study was conducted, schools in Brazil closed their doors and started to resort to an emergency remote education. This initial and chaotic stage may have also affected parent's social representations of remote education, due to increased responsibilities.

Thus, in the first days, several problems related to education were identified, from the lack of family structure, especially of the poorest, to the people's lack of emotional control related to isolation and more frequent family life. With this, arose the need, in the field of science, to study the issue in more depth in order to identify the problems faced by families, their causes and the strategies adopted by them to deal with the new reality.

The responses offered by the participants demonstrated that, although there are many difficulties faced in the current period, the families resorted to creativity and demonstrated great adaptive power to face the situation. It is noteworthy that the social representations related to the problems faced refer to time management, concentration at work and studies, bad internet and balancing work and the child's study time. The strategies adopted to deal with these problems are the organization of the routine, better setting of the workplace and study, communication in order to better inform the children and monitoring them in their activities.

However, it was also identified that parents have a great need for more information and better school support, in addition to financial difficulties being an important factor both considering the increase in costs for everyone being at home, and for the acquisition of new equipment to adapt the study through computers and cell phones.

The contribution of this work is to more accurately identify these needs and help schools, hospitals and responsible agencies to offer support and information, in addition to providing their services with more quality and focus, with the objective of serving families in what they most care about. It is worth mentioning that the social representations identified here were collected in a generic way, that is, without inducing the participant to report their difficulties in a more specific way, such as, for example, in the exclusively psychological or financial field.

There are other fields that can also be explored regarding the situation of the current social distancing. This exploration or deepening is extremely important for a better understanding of what the present moment represents, which is unique and demands practical actions through public policies and academic decisions by schools. Such policies will have a greater chance of success if they show concern for adequate scientific basis. Thus, investigations on the topic shall have continuity.

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